

Flexibility for working adults

EARNING a credible master's degree from a reputable institution allows a graduate to stand out from the crowd. Her deeper, specialised knowledge in a field will ultimately translate into financial gain and career advancement.

However, many working adults find it difficult to cope with attending weekend classes and meeting assignment deadlines, given the demanding

workload and stress they face at their nine-to-five jobs. Hence, a lot of working adults hesitate to enrol in postgraduate study, and many end up putting off pursuing further education.

To address this dilemma, International Medical University (IMU) has launched an open and distance learning (ODL) mode that allows students to complete their master's without being physically present on campus. One such programme is the Master in Molecular Medicine (MMM).

Molecular medicine is a broad field that covers fundamental operations and functions within cells. It involves applications of knowledge in chemistry, cell structure and genes to understand the molecular basis of

diseases and develop effective interventions and management. Even though the promise of development in this field is huge, there is a shortage of scientists who are specifically trained in the aspects of molecular biology and medical or clinical practice, as the two are seldom integrated or properly linked in the traditional Malaysian university degree.

Since the inception of the MMM at IMU, it has attracted the enrolment of medical school graduates who want to gain research experience in the area of molecular and cell biology, taking advantage of their clinical and medical knowledge. The MMM programme also recruits students with backgrounds in the sciences who are interested in biomedicine. Through this programme, students become familiar with relevant medical perspectives and thus develop deeper insight in their

respective professions.

The MMM programme enables medical practitioners, professionals and researchers in health and life sciences professions to develop, improve and apply skills pertinent to molecular techniques and theory to improve disease diagnosis, prognosis and treatments. The programme also instils advanced knowledge in students who aim to progress to doctorate-level research locally or overseas.

The ODL mode offers students a more flexible and personalised teaching and learning environment, which is highly desirable to adult learners compared with conventional modes of delivery. While the contents are delivered mainly through e-lectures (in the form of videos and annotated lectures), online discussions and presentations are also integrated

into the programme, allowing interaction between students and faculty.

IMU understands that while technical knowledge is very much emphasised, providing pastoral care to students cannot be neglected. Each student is assigned a mentor, who serves to address challenges the student faces.

The MMM in ODL mode was officially launched in March and the first cohort's lessons will commence in September. Students who enrol in the MMM programme this year are eligible for a RM5,000 bursary, while IMU alumni are eligible for a 25% bursary off the total tuition fee.

■ For more information about IMU's postgraduate programmes, call 03-2731 7272, email postgraduate@imu.edu.my or visit www.imu.edu.my

